



## Rehabilitation of the Yosemite Valley Loop Road Environmental Assessment

### ***What is new with this project?***

On December 5, 2005, the National Park Service released the *Rehabilitation of the Yosemite Valley Loop Road Environmental Assessment* (EA) for public review and comment. As a result of initial comments received, the National Park Service has identified the need to provide clarification on a few issues addressed in the EA, as well as respond to the requests for an extension of the public comment period.

In response to this public request, the public review and comment period will be extended by 14 days. **Public comments on the EA will now be accepted through January 20, 2006.**

The topics discussed below are intended to address questions regarding tree removal and their location, and a clarification of two graphics presented in the EA depicting existing and proposed roadway widths.

### ***Tree Removal: Where, What and Why?***

As stated on page II-5 of the EA, five trees with a diameter of greater than 12 inches (see photos) are proposed for removal. Tree 1 (a black oak) is located along Southside Drive (between Bridalveil Straight and El Capitan crossover) and is proposed for removal because is a traffic safety concern. As seen in the photo below, the tree leaning out over the roadway and has been hit in the past by large vehicles.

Trees 2, 3, 4, and 5 (an alder, a pine, and two cedars respectively) are located along Bridalveil Straight. Each of these trees is proposed for removal because they are either growing into the existing wingwalls of historic box culverts, or are within the immediate vicinity of a proposed new box culvert inlet channel.



Tree 1: One black oak leaning out over Southside Drive has been hit by large vehicles.

Tree 2: Alder (not shown) growing into outlet wingwall of historic box culvert along Bridalveil Straight.

No additional trees would be removed to achieve the proposed standard travel lane and shoulder widths in the EA. In areas where trees are close to the roadway, and the standard width cannot be achieved, the roadway will be repaved to its existing width.

Trees 3 and 4: One pine, one cedar along Bridalveil Straight are within the immediate vicinity of a proposed inlet channel for a new box culvert where grading will occur.



Tree 5: One Cedar (not shown) is growing into the inlet wingwall of a historic box culvert along Bridalveil Straight.

**Roadway  
Width:  
Existing and  
Proposed**

The National Park Service has received comments from the public requesting clarification of select EA graphics that depict “existing” and “proposed” road widths. The information below clarifies the intended purpose and meaning of these graphics.

Additionally, the National Park Service would like to re-emphasize that this is a maintenance repair project and is in no way intended to implement transportation elements called for in the *Yosemite Valley Plan*.

The EA presents graphics shown in Figures II-1 and II-5, that depict typical existing and proposed cross-sections of the roadway. These rendered cross-section drawings were based on a comprehensive topographical survey of the Yosemite Valley Loop Road, completed in August 2004, as well as other field investigations completed over the past two years.

Figure II-1 represents a general depiction of a cross-section of the existing roadway, which includes travel lanes and shoulders. This figure has been revised in response to public comment to better depict the varied nature of roadway shoulders (the graphic presented in the EA had not identified existing shoulder widths).

Figure II-1 illustrates that the widths of existing paved travel lanes vary from 9 to 11 feet; and existing paved and/or unpaved shoulders vary from 0 to 2 feet. The existing road bench and drainage ditches, on either side of the shoulders, also vary in slope, depth, and width.

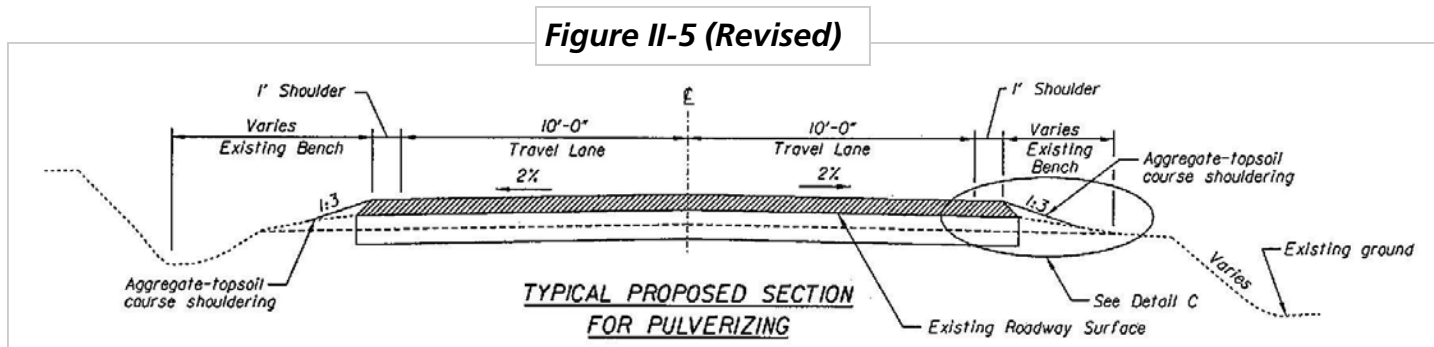
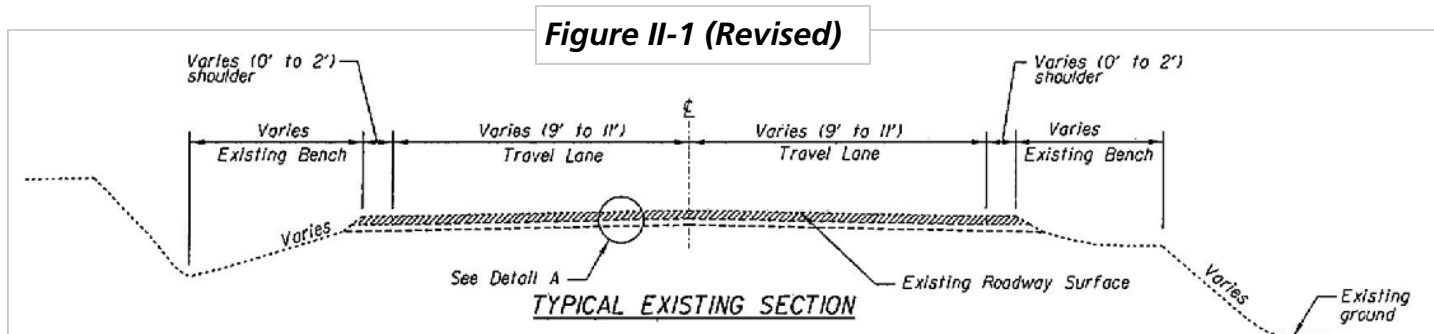


Figure II-5 depicts proposed changes to the Yosemite Valley Loop Road. Travel lane and shoulder widths would be made consistent, where possible, to a standard width of 10 foot travel lanes and 1 foot shoulders. No trees would be removed to achieve these proposed standard travel lane and shoulder widths, nor would the existing road bench be widened to achieve these standard widths. In some locations, the existing roadway width could be made narrower.

**Roadway  
Thickness:  
Milling vs.  
Pulverizing**

The EA proposes two types of methods for preparing the existing roadway surface for repaving. These two types of methods are known as milling and pulverizing.

Milling is the process of removing the top 2 inches of the existing asphalt. New asphalt is then laid on top of the remaining asphalt. Milling is proposed for approximately 5 miles of the 12.55 mile roadway, because the existing subgrade was adequate to support current traffic loads.

Pulverizing is the process of grinding the full depth of existing asphalt as well as a portion of the existing aggregate base. The ground-up asphalt and aggregate base materials are compacted in place to form a recycled aggregate base layer, followed by an application of new asphalt. Pulverizing is proposed for approximately 7.5 miles of the 12.55 mile roadway, because additional support was required to accommodate current traffic loads.